

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honor and remembrance of Carl T. Brancatelli, whose kindness, energy and compassion for others will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him well, especially his family and friends. I extend my deepest condolences to his children, Robert, Wanda, James, Tina, Carl, and Tony; to his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and also to his extended family and friends. Mr. Brancatelli lived his life with great joy, energy and with a loving focus on his family and friends, and he will live on within their hearts and memories forever.

TRIBUTE TO FRED CUSIMANO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Fred Cusimano, a life long resident of Chautauqua County and a truly remarkable man.

COUNTY REMEMBERS FRED CUSIMANO

(By Manley J. Anderson)

Friends and associates of the late Fred J. Cusimano of 190 Linwood Ave., Jamestown, who died Monday morning in the WCA Hospital emergency room have expressed their thoughts about him.

"He was a man for all seasons," said Joseph Trusso Jr., longtime friend, fellow Democrat and veteran member of the Chautauqua County Legislature. "He worked on an oil rig, he owned a gas station, he was a tree farmer. We planted Christmas trees. I helped him plant some of those trees."

Cusimano had a lengthy career in the voting machine industry, first as sales manager of Voting Machine Service Inc. owned by the T.H. Huhn Agency. He also worked as sales representative for the former Automatic Voting Machine Company from 1960-1990, and in the later part of his career was named vice-president of Automatic Voting Machine. He had also worked for the Voting Machine Service Center in Gerry, until his retirement in 1992.

Voting machines weren't Cusimano's only foray into politics, however. Trusso said Cusimano was respected by both local Republicans and Democrats while being invited to President John F. Kennedy's 1960 inauguration.

"He worked for Automatic Voting Machine and became vice president," Trusso said. "He was a member of the Board of Supervisors when there were only about seven of them. He was par excellence about elections. He knew everything about election law and wrote most of the election laws in New York state. He was a strong Democrat who believed in the democratic way and he wished at times we could go back to it. Fred's predecessors were all Republicans. You can call him a man for all seasons. You can call him a Renaissance man. He advised the city's Democratic and Republican mayors. He worked very hard for the parks in the county. He had a trail named after him."

Trusso also noted Cusimano's dedication to the Bemus Point rest stop and Chautauqua Lake overlook even when he wasn't feeling well.

"You never see a Fred Cusimano come along very often," Trusso said. "He's a great loss to the city, the county and the state and especially to the Democrats. This man should and will be honored. He devoted a good part of his life to the parks of Chautauqua County. He also helped Allegany

State Park. He was a member of the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) that helped build it. He was in the Army before and after the draft and before and after the war (World War II) for about five years."

Trusso said that at their traditional breakfast meeting Tuesday he brought a toast to the little restaurant where the faithful gathered with an empty chair for Cusimano who was remembered by his surviving comrades.

Trusso concluded with, "I owe him a lot. I don't see anyone who can take his place. What a wonderful person."

He was influential in returning the City of Jamestown from a "non-partisan" to the "party" system for local elections. He was a past member of the Jamestown Area Chamber of Commerce and served on its Governmental Affairs Committee and its Greater Jamestown Industrial Development Committee. Cusimano was a past member of the city Planning Commission and served as chairman of the county Economic Development Commission. He also served several years on the Advisory Council to the state Legislature's Joint Legislative Committee on Election Law, and for many years served as a consultant and honorary member to the Election Commissioners Association of New York State.

"He was considered the father of the Chautauqua County Parks System," said Anthony M. Teresi, a longtime Cusimano friend and former county legislator. "He was very active with the parks until the end. The West Side Trail was named for him. He helped everyone who asked for help and it was good help. With me, he was a good and loyal friend who helped me a lot with some of the county issues when I was a legislator. When he believed in something he pursued it until it was done. I consider him the brother I never had. I miss him dearly."

John C. Cheney of Belleview, Bemus Point, a longtime member and former chairman of Chautauqua County Parks Commission, said of Cusimano, "He was with us for years. He was one of the founders of it. He's a real loss. We've named one of the trails after him. He had a lot to do with getting those trails organized and started."

Fred was a man who fully understood how to live to its fullest and that Mr. Speaker is why I rise to honor him today.

THE GRACE ALICE CAMPBELL FOUNDATION

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this week is Congenital Heart Defects, CHD, Awareness Week. Across America, over 1 million families face the challenges and hardships of raising children with congenital heart defects. Roughly 1 in 125 children are born with 1 of approximately 35 different congenital heart defects in the United States. Some of these are treatable with medications while others require surgeries or even transplants. Heart defects are the No. 1 birth defect in the United States, affecting 32,000 babies in the United States every year. They are also the leading cause of birth defect related deaths worldwide during the first year of life, and while genetics or environmental factors are assumed to be the cause for congenital heart defects, it will take more research to help uncover their cause.

The Grace Alice Campbell Foundation, founded by her parents Brenda and Chris Campbell of Mansfield, MA, which is in my district, has been established to raise public awareness of these birth defects, assist in the treatment of these children, and raise research funds to help doctors discover the cause of congenital heart defects and find a cure. Grace Alice was born on September 4, 2003, with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, and by the time she was 5 months old, she had already had two open-heart surgeries. Now as a toddler, Grace Alice's perseverance is a wonderful example of love and courage for others every day. The foundation, launched by her parents, serves as a support group for the families of those affected, encouraging these families to celebrate life, remember loved ones lost, and to honor dedicated health professionals.

I extend my congratulations and express my admiration to the Grace Alice Campbell Foundation for its hard work on behalf of those affected by congenital heart defects and their families. I also ask that, because of the resolve of the Campbell family as well as many others across the country, the article, "Heart Buddies," by Deborah Knight Snyder in the Norton Mirror, published on Friday, February 3, 2006, documenting the courage and struggle of these families, be printed here.

HEART BUDDIES

(By Deborah Knight Snyder)

One in every 100 babies is born with a heart defect.

February 7-14 is Congenital Heart Defects (CHD) Awareness Week, and a group of Massachusetts mothers agrees word needs to get out about the many children living with CHDs. For these mothers, that awareness is simply a way of life, because their children were born with heart defects.

"People know more about conditions like Down's Syndrome and spina bifida than they do about heart defects, when heart defects are actually the number one birth defect in the United States," said Lyn McPhail of Braintree during a recent support group meeting in Mansfield for mothers of children with CHDs.

Increased consciousness will hopefully lead to more help and, ultimately, to more funding, she said. There are approximately 35 different types of congenital—meaning present at birth—heart defects.

McPhail is the mother of 15-month-old Cameron, who was diagnosed with a CHD when he was just 1½ days old.

Cameron has had two heart valve operations already and still needs a valve replacement. The quandary, his mother explains, is what to do next. There is a small mechanical valve available for children who are at least 2 years old, but that valve will become too small as he grows and would ultimately require yet another operation. However, she said, there is clinical testing currently underway in Canada and Europe which could produce better options.

"You're just racing against time," she said.

McPhail is a member of Heart Buddies, a group of mothers and kids from all over the Boston area who get together every month at each other's homes to lend and provide support. The mothers initially met through literature from Children's Hospital and through Little Hearts, Inc., a Connecticut-based organization which lends support to families of kids with CHDs.

The children—who outwardly appear to be healthy, chubby babies and toddlers—play, while the mothers talk about their experiences.